

## Making It Up To You by MissFiction

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**Summary:**

You and everyone's favourite chief of police get it on in a public place.

## 1. Chapter 1

It was a never-ending sea of stupid over the last week at work, as well as in your personal life, and it was impossible to get caught up on the piles of paper that kept appearing on your desk. When you finally clocked out for your weekend you couldn't have been more relieved. Even though the bus was going to be late, and even though you discovered several runs in your stockings that climbed all the way up your legs underneath your skirts, you were just happy it was finally over for a couple days. You were all too happy to let the weekend crew take care of some of the filing for a change. As you packed your things into your bag and slipped your coat around your shoulders, your phone began to ring.

After a few moments of debating on whether or not to take the call or to just pretend you had already left the office, you plopped back into your chair and pressed the receiver against your ear. There was no way the weekend staff was going to bother to check messages on the weekend, and it *could* have been something urgent.

"Hello, I'm sorry but our offices are closed for the night. Can I take a mess—"

"Hey, baby," a deep voice rasped directly into your ear. "I'm glad I caught you. What are you still doing at work so late?" Immediately you regretted taking the phone call at all, getting tense and bristling at the low, cautious tone on the other end of the line.

"Don't 'hey baby' me, Hopper. What do you want? I was just about to leave."

There's a long pause following your unfriendly tone. Your voice had been a little harsher than you had intended it to be, and maybe it was silly to be fighting with Hopper in the first place, but you were sick to death of him making promises and not following through, missing dates, acting contrite so you would forgive him... and then doing it all over again. It was more than not feeling like a priority, it was about feeling like you weren't even an afterthought. Whether he was the chief of police or not, you were tired of feeling like you were just a body to warm his bed for him when he finally decided to come

home to you.

He cleared his throat, you could practically hear him pinching the bridge of his nose the way he always did when he was stressed out. "It's been three days since we've so much as seen each other," he sighed, "I wanted to know if you were planning on coming around again any time soon?"

You laughed dryly. "Oh, so it only took you three days to notice I wasn't coming around?" you said, sarcastically, steamrolling on when you heard him begin to form a protest. "That's record time, I guess. No, Hopper, I'm tired. It's been a crazy week at work, not that you would know that, and I'm going home. I suggest you do the same." It felt terrible; you really missed seeing him, so much so that it hurt in a physical way that made your stomach twist at the thought of going back to your own apartment instead of to his trailer and sleeping next to him for another night. It wasn't even sexual; it was about craving the warmth, comfort, and intimacy you experienced sharing a bed with Hop over sleeping alone.

"What if I come to you tonight, then? If I leave the station now, you won't even have to take the bus. I could pick you up in the next fifteen minutes or less. It's really cold tonight, sweetheart, and I really want to see you..."

"Oh, *for once* you can make the time and do me the *favour* of coming to me, huh?" you snapped.

Hopper is quiet for a long moment, and you wonder if you've managed to scare him off for the night. When he still doesn't say anything, you press the receiver closer to your ear to listen for breathing, wondering if he had broken the connection. After a couple seconds you get a tired sigh, and his voice softly asking, "*Please, baby?*"

You exhaled loudly into the phone and ran your hands through your hair. Your desire to fight melts at his tone, you just feel the exhaustion pushing on your shoulders. He is right about one thing anyway, the wind was freezing cold and was strong enough to blow right through you. "I don't know, Hop. I still need to get groceries, I think tonight is just a bad night—"

"I can take you to Charlie's," he said quickly, "His place is the only one open this late, and it might be closed by the time you get there if you have to wait for the bus to come around again now. Please," he added, "please. I want to see you, even if it's just for an hour. Okay?"

Against your better judgement, the slightly vulnerable tone in his voice, an emotional wavering that he usually kept at a significant distance, caused your resolve to collapse. "Okay, Hopper. Come get me then, that's very kind of you to offer. I'll see you soon." You gently placed the phone back on the cradle and rested your face in your hands before he could respond. Why was he always so hard to refuse? Why was it that when he left you high and dry *multiple times a week*, he still managed to reel you back in when you tried set some space between you?

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It wasn't a long wait. Hopper must have sped across town to get to your office in record time. In a way, you were relieved to see him so soon, even if you were still a little miffed with him. You had decided to wait outside despite your boss' offer to give you a spare key to lock the door behind you, and the wind was cold and sharp. In little more than your jacket, which did little to protect you from the elements, and a skirt, which did even less, you were not dressed for a long wait in the wind. It was that awkward time of year when it was warm enough to wear an outfit designed for early fall during the day, and too damn cold for anything other than a winter coat once the sun went down.

Hopper pulled into the parking lot at high speed and stopped so suddenly you heard his tires squeal a little against the pavement. He threw his door open and climbed out, keeping his eyes focused on where you were standing, watching you shiver. He took his hat off and threw it in the back seat of his truck, before approaching slowly. There's a small, careful smile on his mouth, a kind of wry curve of his lips that would have been sweeter only if it fully reached his eyes.

"It's really good to see you, sweetheart," he said softly. You resist the urge to melt your frozen demeanor and rolled your eyes at the affectionate nickname.

“Yeah,” you say, trying to keep the warmth out of your voice. It really was nice to see him, even after only three days, but you didn’t want him to get a big head about it. “It is. Sorry to bother you, for a ride I mean. I just know I don’t have anything to make for dinner at home, and Charlie’s is the only place open past 9pm in this town...”

“I know,” he said agreeably. “It’s no trouble, I offered. Come on, the heat’s still on; come warm up. You look half frozen.” His eyes drift down your body, taking in the way your shoulders are hunched against the cold wind, but lingering on the bare skin of your smooth legs. He avoided saying anything, but he did watch the way the material slid up your thighs as you climbed into the passenger seat he opened for you. You noticed the gaze and felt a reactionary heat rush up into your cheeks, but you just started fiddling with his radio. You knew he hated when you did that, but he stayed quiet while you turned dials as he climbed back into the driver’s seat.

“So, nothing to eat at home?” he said awkwardly. You shrugged, knowing this was always an argument between the two of you whenever Jim brought it up. You were a good cook, but you never ate anything other than take-out when you were home by yourself. He always gave you shit about taking better care of yourself. The irony of that argument was not lost of you.

All of that aside, it was kind of an awkward drive. There was a tense silence that you could practically feel radiating in the air between the two of you, but you couldn’t come up with anything to say that would effectively break it. He asked you briefly about your week, citing that you had mentioned it was a doozy, but you were off the clock and you didn’t want to think about work again until Monday morning. You asked how things were going at the station, and he gave you the impression that he was as busy as ever. It made something inside you bristle again, but you relaxed when you realized that meant he must have at least taken time out of that schedule today to come see you. For once.

There’s another few minutes of tension, Hopper focuses on the traffic in front of him, what little traffic there is, and you play with the hem of your skirt absentmindedly. You alternated between staring at your hands and out the window. As you arrived at a red light, Hopper took one of his hands from the wheel, and tentatively rested it on your

knee. You glance down at it, and then back up at his face. You meet his eyes, which are looking at you warmly. It makes your heart skip in your chest, seeing him look at you so intensely after only three days apart. Three days without him, and look how the two of God help you, you were hooked on this man.

"I know you're mad at me," he murmured, "and I know I haven't been making much time for us— for our relationship— lately, but... I really am sorry. I didn't mean to stand you up. And honestly, I would prefer if you would just get pissed and yell at me. I don't know how long I can stand you 'freezing me out,' just yell at me until I stop acting like an asshole. I've barely been back to my own place in three days because it's a pain in the ass to be there without you."

You snorted. "If only it were that easy, Jim."

"Hey now, that's the first time you've said my name since we started talking. That's a pretty good sign, huh? Are you starting to forgive me?"

You rested your hand on top of his affectionately as the light turned green. His posture turned more relaxed at the contact. Hopper turned his hand around without letting yours go and then linked your fingers together.

"Yeah, I guess I'm just an idiot like that. Just... going forward, could you *please* try to give me a little advanced warning when we need to cancel our plans? A little more advance than when I've already arrived at the restaurant and you call the front desk to tell me at the *table* that you can't make it. That was so shitty, Jim, everyone was looking at me. It's a small town."

Hopper pulled the car into Charlie's parking lot, throwing the stick shift into place and bringing the back of your hands up to his lips. "Well, how could they help but stare at *you*, sweetheart? Seeing you all dolled up, even prettier than usual? Don't know how I *could* have sat through a dinner and kept my hands to myself, if I'm bein' honest."

"Mhmm, yeah," you said sweetly, "'Cause you do such a good job keeping your hands to yourself the rest of the time, right?"

There was a sly smile that started to form on Hopper lips, but you quickly took your hand back and slipped out the car before he could reply with whatever sexual remark was brewing in his mind, behind those gleaming eyes. He looked much more relaxed than he did when he first pulled up to your office, downright playful, even, which made you feel much better than you had in days. You were hopelessly in love with this man, as shit at communication as he was, and it said a lot that your mood could be so easily influenced by his.

“We don’t have all night. Charlie’s is the only place that’s open past ten, but he’s not gonna stay open while we sit out front and flirt in the car. I have groceries to get!” you teased.

“I’d rather flirt in the car,” grumbled Hopper. “Are you sure you need to do this now? I know we came all the way here, but since you’re not mad at me anymore, I have leftovers at home. We could just...”

“Who said I’m not mad anymore?” you said with a laugh and a wink. “I think you still have some making-it-up-to-me to do. But yes, since we’re here already, I’m just going to pick up a few things. Look at it this way,” you walked around the car and planted a chaste kiss on Hopper’s lips, “I’ll be able to stay in much later *tomorrow* if I have no where else to go in the morning.” You heard Hopper groan behind you as you walked past him into the store. You glanced over your shoulder and bit your lip teasingly when you saw him reluctantly shuffling along behind you.

It was immediately apparent that there was basically no one else in the building as the automatic doors opened in front of you. There were several employees shooting the shit, presumably waiting their shifts out since the store was mostly dead. There were only a couple cars aside from Hopper’s in the parking lot, and they probably all belonged to the staff. One of the clerks nearest the door gave you a look and glanced pointedly at his watch as you walked by.

“Sorry, we’re only going to be a few minutes, I promise,” you said sweetly, flashing a smile. The clerk rolled his eyes but returned to his previous form of leaning against his broom rather than actually sweeping with it.

“Don’t know what you’re apologizing for,” murmured Hopper behind

you. "It's not like he's not getting paid to stay open either way."

You shrugged, "I know what it's like to wish people could just show up at reasonable hours when they know you're gonna be closing soon. Kids don't get paid enough to deal with bullshit and customers who won't get the hell out at closing." Hopper made a noise of agreement at that. He grabbed a basket to carry your groceries in, trudging along behind you.

The two of you went milling around the mostly empty store. Most of the employees were hovering around the front of the store. You only encountered one other person doing some late-night shopping, but they were already heading up to the till as you approached the snack aisle.

"Jesus, don't you eat anything healthy at all?" asked Hopper as you loaded your basket with a few frozen TV dinners and opted for canned options over some of their fresh alternatives. You gave him a pointed look, glancing at the pack of cigarettes you could see poking out of his shirt pocket. He sucked his teeth for a moment before offering a quiet, "Point taken."

After a few minutes of shopping, you glanced down at your basket and mentally calculated what you were going to be spending on the trip tonight.

"I think I've got enough left over for ice cream, I'm going to run back to the freezer section. I'll meet you at the front, okay?" you asked. Jim nodded and watched as you went scurrying away, waiting until you disappeared down the aisle you had indicated. With a quick glance around him, he noticed that most of the staff was still sitting down near the front door.

He followed you to the back of the store where the freezers were.

You spent a few seconds deciding which flavour you wanted and let out a small yelp of surprise when a hand reach over your shoulder and prevented you from opening the door. You tried to turn around and tell whoever had snuck up on you to back off, when their other arm slung around your torso and pushed your hips forward into the freezer with their own weight.



You opened your mouth to scream for Jim, before you managed to catch sight of your pursuer out of the corner of your eye. Hopper braced himself against the freezer door with one hand, but his other hand drifted further down your body, until his fingers slipped gently underneath your skirts. His fingers lightly grazed against your panties, searchingly, before pressing deliberately. Your heart jumped into your throat, accidentally letting out a light, breathy moan. He's only spurred on by the noise, which you made again as his flat palm travelled around your hips and squeezed your ass firmly. His arm lifted your skirt higher and his hand touched around the parts of your body concealed by fabric.

"Three days felt like forever without you around, you know," he whispered against your ear. You could feel his beard scrape lightly against your neck as his pressed his mouth to the soft skin where your throat and shoulder met. He shifted his hips against yours, revelling in the way you immediately relaxed the length of your body against his.

The hand that he was using to brace himself against the door bent at the elbow, so his hand could slowly stroke your throat. He lightly held you in place without exercising any forceful pressure, but the chill in his skin against your increasing temperature was enough to jar you back into reality.

"What the hell do you think you're doing? There are still other people here!" you hissed. You attempted to turn around in Hopper's grip, but he kept you completely still against him with the pressure of his body against yours combined with his tight grip. "Have you completely lost your mind? You're the *chief of police*, you know. What are people going to think if *you* of all people get locked up for public indecency of all things?"

"I don't care," he replied simply. He gently scraped his teeth against the skin on your neck, offering the temptation of a love bite without delivering on the promise. "Like I said, baby: three days without you? Felt like forever. Missed you." You grabbed his hands and tried to pull them away from your body. He was surprised well enough that you were able to at least turn around to face him. You were not surprised to find that he had that look in his eyes already; that intensely hot gaze that sent electricity coursing through you from

head to toe.

As soon as you're facing around again, though, his hands returned to your body with a vengeance. His big hands slid around your hips. One of his palms drifted underneath your jacket and tracing his fingers along your ribcage. Hopper slowly walked towards you, forcing you to take steps away in an attempt to keep him at a distance. However, you failed to realize that he was just backing you into the bare wall next to the freezer instead of against the cold glass.

*How considerate*, you thought sarcastically, although your desire to resist was steadily declining.

Hopper crowded against you, pressing his hips firmly against yours again. "What the *hell* are you doing?" you asked breathily, trying to ignore the way his body towered over and completely enveloped yours, as well as the spicy scent of his cologne.

Hopper trailed warm kisses along your jaw, and murmured, "Making it up to you, baby..." directly your ear.

His foot gently nudged your feet apart, so he could brace his knee against the wall under your ass. His fingers slipped underneath the fabric of your skirt again, lifting it up slightly so he could fit them underneath the waistband of your panties. Instead of protesting like you had *fully* intended to, his feather-light touch grazed against the bundle of nerves between your legs. Every thought of protest you had flew from your mind; his touch forced little more than a gasp of surprise to fall from your lips. His mouth quickly swallowed the desperate moan that followed. He shifted until his knee supported the majority of your body weight between himself and the wall when your knees started to shake.

"J-Jim," you whispered, throwing your arms around your ridiculous boyfriend's neck. The leverage allowed you to roll your hips against his knee; Hoppers' hand moved a little quicker against your clit. He always relished the way he could reduce you to putty in his hands so quickly. Your body always responded to his; he would never get tired of seeing that look on your face when you decided to let him have his way with you, even when he was asking for something so perverted.

“Fuck, you’re so wet, baby. I missed you so much, these last few days. Show me how much you missed me, too, yeah?” His voice was deep, affected, and rasping as his arousal grew. He pressed his hips into yours a little further and you were jolted back into reality when you felt how hard Hopper was through his jeans. You immediately braced both of your hands against the sheriff’s shoulders, using the remaining shreds of your willpower to push him away. The fear of being caught and the dangerous temptation of doing it anyway were at war inside you, and you weren’t sure which side you wanted to listen to more.

Hopper redoubled his efforts as you tried to push away. His kisses dizzied you, but you pushed again. You bit your bottom lip nearly hard enough to draw blood as you felt that familiar tense coil curling tightly inside you. “You have to stop, we’re going to get caught,” you murmured frantically. “The store will be closing soon, someone is going to come looking for us.”

There was a soft clinking of metal, and it took you a second to realize that Hopper had decided to ignore your warning and instead opted to guide one of your hands into his jeans with his spare hand. Despite your concern, you took his cock in your palm and steadily followed his pace without hesitation. The rational part of your brain told you that you needed to keep alert and convince Hopper to take you home, or at least to somewhere you wouldn’t probably be arrested for having sex, but the more pathetic part of your brain that desperately missed this man for those three days you were apart only fueled your desire. Palming his cock in your hand and seeing the way his entire body curled downwards towards yours to get even closer made you understand the thrilling part of what the two of you were doing even more.

“Fuck, sweetheart,” he gasped, bucking into the rhythm set by your hand. Hopper matched your pace eagerly, chasing the same sensation and desire for friction as you were.

Still, you tried to keep an eye on the opposite end of the aisle. Perhaps if you heard someone coming, you would be able to at least preserve your modesty. Hop’s hand may have been partially concealed by the hanging fabric of your skirt, but it wouldn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out what the two of you were doing back

here if someone rounded the corner on you. Jumping away from each other would still be embarrassing, but it was better than the alternative. Plus, it wouldn't be the first time either of you were embarrassed by being busted for making out in a public place.

Without breaking rhythm at all, Hopper tilted your chin so that your eyes snapped back up to his. He was gazing intently at you, his mouth opened just slightly as he panted against your neck. "What's got your attention over there, baby? Keep your eyes on me." You swallowed thickly, unable to keep yourself from glancing nervously down the aisle again as you felt the impending pleasure of your climax vibrating through every nerve-ending in your body. "Hey," snapped Hopper again, "Look at me, sweetheart, I wanna see the look in your eyes as you come undone."

"One of us needs to keep a lookout, and since *you've* completely lost your mind tonight I'mgoingtohaveto!" you hissed rapidly.

The smile that slowly curved Hopper's mouth was equal parts devious and amused. As it became more difficult for you to speak normally, Hop knew you were growing ever closer to completely falling apart under his ministrations.

It was difficult for Jim Hopper to admit exactly *how much* he had missed you. He spent a lot of years cultivating that gruff demeanor that successfully kept the people around him an arm's length away. After everything fell apart with his ex-wife and his daughter, he hadn't believed that he could allow himself to be vulnerable with another person in that same way again. Marriage was definitely off the table, as far as he was concerned. Tried that, fucked it up. Shortly after you arrived in their little podunk town, though, he began to change his mind. Something inside him slowly defrosted. Somehow his crush on you turned into a no-strings-attached friends-with-benefits agreement, to which both of you had failed to uphold your detached ends of the bargain. Still, he knew he was certain that he was not nearly good enough for you. When he hadn't seen you in those three days, he had been genuinely terrified that you had finally realized it, too. In part, this exploit might have been a way for him to reaffirm your interest in him, as well as the fact that he simply did miss you that badly when you had stayed away.

The hand that wasn't touching you skimmed up your body, palmed your breast, and then tangled in the hair at the back of your neck. He pulled firmly to expose your throat, mouthing at the soft skin there, which allowed his beard to scratch a delicious burn against your sensitive skin. The hand dancing on your clit never slowed. "Well, I won't stop anyway, sweetheart," he rasped in your ear. "Even if we get caught, I won't stop. So, don't concern yourself. Don't look away. Keep your eyes on me."

Your heart, already pounding in your chest, leapt straight into your throat. His hot breath spreading over your throat sent goosebumps cascading down your extremities. Hopper did spare a glance over his shoulder, but when he didn't see or hear anyone there, aside from the sound of your near-frantic breathing, he returned his earnest gaze back to your half-lidded eyes.

Somehow it felt as though you had lost your voice; you were beginning to feel light-headed from holding your breath so tightly, so that no other sounds were able to slip out. There was no other way to convey to Hopper that you were reaching the end of your tether. You murmured a broken "*Please*," as loudly as you could, kissing Hopper fervently. If the way his hands increased their pace and fervour was any indication, he was able to translate the message. If it was remotely possible, Jim pressed his body even tighter against yours as you began to tremble.

"Go on," he urged, overwhelming your senses with his towering presence. "Fuck, baby, look at you, squirming against my fingers like that. If you don't want to get caught, you have to let go. I want to see you, baby, let it all go." He quickly pulled your hand away from the gap between his open fly before he came in his jeans, all but pinning you so tightly against the wall that you could scarcely turn your head. He let out a practically feral growl when he realized that you were finally tipping over the edge. He quickly muffled the high-pitched moans that slipped between your lips with a few more desperate open-mouthed kisses, watching your body convulse against his with perverse interest as the waves of pleasure finally imploded inside you.

Hopper groaned as your fists tightened hard against his shoulders. You threw your arms around him and allowed your hips to roll

frantically as your orgasm washed through you. He hoisted your leg up higher, so he could press his hard cock against your core in a silent promise for later. His hold on your body was the only thing that kept you from collapsing to the floor as you came back down to Earth. He exhaled a laugh through his nose as you worked on getting you feet back under you.

"Alright, now we *really* need to get back to your place," he whispered between pressing kisses anywhere he could reach. "So I can take care of you *properly*."

"Are you kidding me?" you panted, feeling warm and breathless. "Now you feel like we might need some privacy?" You swallowed hard, trying to catch your breath. Hopper readjusted his jeans, then smoothed your skirt down around your thighs again. He picked up the small basket of groceries he had discarded with one hand and pulled you behind him with the other tightly gripping yours. You could feel the heat of your body still on his hands and blushed furiously. "You're absolutely ridiculous. I can't believe we just got away with that."

The pair of you rounded the corner and went straight to the checkout. You averted your eyes the whole time, but Hopper was seamless in pretense that he *hadn't* just made you cum with his fingers in the middle of a grocery store. The employees around the front of the store barely paid either of you any attention as you approached, but you felt your face flush even hotter anyway. The girl who bagged your groceries barely glanced up from her nails throughout the entire transaction, but still your voice was soft and nervous when you spoke to her. Hopper kept his hand on your waist the entire time, looking aloof. He practically tossed money at the counter before you could even reach into your purse, then dragged you out the door so fast you nearly stumbled. Hopper peeled out of the parking lot and quickly pulled onto a side street, so he could speed without the delay of stoplights.

"I'm really glad you called, my night would have been going pretty differently if you hadn't," you said softly, tucking a few strands of your messy hair behind your ear. As frustrated as you got with him, with those long hours and the more dangerous parts of his job that he was bad at sharing with you, Lord knew you were still hooked on

him. You would never admit it to his face, but he could probably get away with anything in the end as long as he continued to come home with that same loving look in his eyes as he always did when he saw you.

Hopper took one hand off the wheel and grabbed yours, threaded your fingers and squeezed firmly. He brought the back of your hand to his mouth and kissed it softly. You blushed, squeezing back. He grinned silently to himself when he saw the way you were still chewing on your bottom lip and looking back at him fondly.

“Yeah well,” he chuckled lowly, “I’m not done making it up to you, baby. Not by a long shot.”

## 2. Chapter 2

### Summary for the Chapter:

A companion piece to the first part, a view from the other side that I originally cut out of the fic because I didn't think it fit very well, but it still turned out kinda cute so y'all might as well get to see it!

Hopper knew he had seriously fucked up this time when he finally walked through the door, completely bone-weary, at 3:00AM and the entire house was completely pitch black. Normally his bedroom would be dark, but there would be other signs of life showing that you had come over in the cabin somewhere. Those could be anything; your shoes left on the porch, or dishes left in the sink to be cleaned after breakfast in the morning. It wouldn't be unusual for you to already be sound asleep and wrapped in his covers so tightly that he would have to get a second blanket to slide in beside you, but one of the small lamps would always be lit for him in the front room so he would know you were there.

There was no doubt in his mind that you would be upset with him when he left a message with the manager of the restaurant he was supposed to meet you at came out to tell you he wouldn't be able to make it in time for dinner, but your complete absence that night told him that he might have done some real irreparable damage this time. You didn't even want to *fight* with him, to tell him off and let him apologize, after he stood you up. That was *not* a good sign at all.

Jim called your name anyway, softly at first, and then with a little more urgency. He listened for a minute for a response and was met with nothing. His mind immediately set to the worst-case scenario and worried for your safety, but he knew that was just paranoia talking. The truth was that you just didn't want to talk to him.

His heart thumped painfully in his chest at the thought of you so angry with him. It was his fault though, he should have let you know way earlier that he wasn't going to make it. You were a very understanding person when it came to his work, but he knew that a person's patience could only be stretched so thin. In any case, he



knew there was no sense in trying to go over to your place now. At three in the morning, knocking on your door and waking you up would only upset you further. You had work in the morning too, after all. He resolved to give you a good night's sleep and some time to cool off, and then he would go to see you and apologize properly in the morning.

That was the end of the first day without seeing you for even a few minutes.

The morning of the second day, Hopper was up and out the door with plenty of time to spare before he was due at the station. He knew he looked a little dishevelled, but it was only because he slept like shit the night before. Over the last few weeks he had grown quite accustomed to falling asleep with the sound of your soft snoring next to him. You always insisted that you didn't snore when he teased you, but it never really bothered him. He would have thought it was going to take more getting-used-to to start sleeping next to another person when you first started spending the night, but it turned out he slipped right back into the habit as though he had been missing it for years without even realizing.

When he arrived at your door, he was surprised to find that there was no sign of life there either. Your mailbox was full to bursting, and there were no sounds coming from your open windows.

There was another surge of nerves that spread like wildfire in his chest, but he was willing to bet you had gone to stay over at one of your friends the night before to drink and complain about his behaviour. It wouldn't have been the first time you had needed to recuperate with friends after he was an ass. Hopper checked his watch and realized he had to head to the station, but hesitated. He would just have to tell Flo that if you called the message was to be passed to him immediately. That was all he could do; he was sure you would be in contact with him as soon as you had a minute at work.

Except that call never came.

"Jim, for the last time, *no* I haven't received any calls from your little lady today. I've gotten the sense that it must be important, so rest

assured that if she calls I will come to you *immediately*.” Even Flo had gotten sick of his inquiries.

His mood had been foul all day, his fellow officers steered clear of him, and as members of the public encountered him there were fewer calls coming in as word-of-mouth spread the news that he was less tolerant of the *everyday nonsense* than usual.

The entire day passed at a snail’s pace. Hopper could practically feel every single minute ticking by. He got sick of waiting around for your call by noon, so he decided he would visit your office in hopes of making his apology and potentially taking you to dinner in hopes of making up for the date he had missed. According to your coworkers he had only just missed you, you had left not ten minutes earlier to take your lunch break. He hastily made his thanks and returned to his vehicle to anxiously puff on a cigarette, and then another. The longer it was before he could make his apology, the more time passed before he was even able to *see* you, the more uneasy he felt.

He went to a payphone and dialed your number, but hung up immediately when he was only able to reach your answering machine.

That night Jim managed to make it home at a reasonable hour, but he was disappointed to find that there was still no indication that you had even stopped by. Somehow it was like you had become a ghost. On the one hand, he was relieved to see that his drawers hadn’t been emptied of the clothes you had left at his place for the nights you spent over, but on the other hand it wasn’t like you to avoid him so completely. He briefly thought about hopping back in the Blazer and driving back to your apartment to see if you had gone home that night, but he decided against it. He rang your place twice, to no avail, and then decided he needed to take a step back and allow you to have your own space for as long as you needed it before you were ready to talk to him again.

That is, if you *ever* wanted to talk to him again.

Hopper tried to keep the thought from harassing him, but what if you had finally realized you were too goddamned good for him and the shit he put you through? What if he had been thoughtless one too

many times and now you were finished with him?

It's not like he could blame you. It genuinely made him nervous how much he loved you, but he had never been very good at letting people in since he lost Sara, and then Diane. Being in a serious relationship was completely foreign territory, and while it was easy being with you, he could still be an asshole and hold himself at a considerable distance without meaning to. Those were just excuses of course, but when he really thought about it maybe he wasn't as healed as he had thought he was. That thought scared the shit out of him, because if even he could see it then there was no way you wouldn't be seeing it soon enough. He never had been any good at hiding anything from you.

By the third day, Hopper is completely exhausted. He managed to shower, but his expression is sour and tired. He had another sleepless night, another night of staring at his phone and hoping it would ring, another night of knowing he might have completely fucked up the best thing he had going for him and being powerless to even try and save it. There wasn't any chance that he could try and catch you at your office again, with the pile of paperwork he was balancing. Flo tried to pry more information out of him as to why he was coming to their office looking like he had been hit by a truck, but he said nothing.

"If there's something I can do to help you, Jim, just ask," she said kindly, the one time he had come out of his office during the entire afternoon. Hopper just thanked her gruffly and locked himself inside his office again. No one dared to disturb him.

He sat perched behind his desk for hours, and the entire day managed to get itself over with before he knew it. Even though there had been nothing to distract him in terms of calls. It was almost a huge plus, he powered through a veritable mountain of paperwork that he had been avoiding for the better half of two weeks, but now that he was through with it he had no idea what to do next.

After everyone else finally left, he sagged against his desk and rested his head in his hands. He didn't know what he was going to do. He hoped a call would come in, but his talkie was unusually silent. Maybe he would pull an old case and lose himself in it, maybe he

would just go for a drive and keep driving until morning. There was certainly no point in him going home if you weren't going to be there, he wasn't going to sleep anyway. And after almost three days of completely ignoring him, he wasn't at all hopeful that you were going to be showing up any time soon.

He sighs heavily, feeling the weight of your absence physically in a way that makes him wonder if he's losing his mind already. When did he get so dependent on your presence in his life? What did he do before you had come around?

Hopper opens his desk and pulls out a framed photograph from where he deposited it that morning without looking at it too closely. It used to have a picture of his ex-wife in it, but he pulled that picture immediately after he had been served their divorce papers. It sat on his desk completely empty for a long time, before he met you. After a few months of dancing around the matter of your relationship, he replaced it with a picture of your smiling face, though it was a picture of you with an old ex-boyfriend. With a start, Jim realized he was pretty sure that he didn't have a single photo of the two of you together. The picture had needed to be folded in half to fit inside his frame anyway, but he could still see the stranger's fingers curled around his girlfriend's hip; he could also tell that you were leaning into the touch without an ounce of hesitation, beaming brightly into the camera.

Why didn't he have any pictures of you of his own? Maybe he had been more negligent of his relationship with you than he had ever thought. You put up with and tolerated so much, and he was starting to realize he truly didn't deserve your seemingly unending well of patience. Though he supposed that well might have finally dried up now.

Without thinking much more about it, he picked up the phone and dialed your work number from memory. He glanced at the clock as he held the receiver to his ear and realized that you had most likely already clocked out for the night. *If she picks up*, he thought, closing his eyes, *I'm going to change everything. If she picks up, I'm going to become someone worthy of her. I'll show her that she's the most important thing in my life, even when I'm busy, and even when everything starts to go to hell.* It rang several times, before he heard the call connect. His

stomach lurched hopefully, and he was relieved when he actually heard your voice answer him for the first time in three days, recognizing it instantaneously.

“Hello, I’m sorry but our offices are closed for the night. Can I take a mess—”

“Hey, baby...” he murmured softly, so excited to hear you that he couldn’t contain himself. Tension left his body in waves, which was then replaced by the sensation of pure unadulterated relief. Your following tone was a little harsh, but he was almost delirious with relief that he was finally able to speak to you that it didn't even matter. “I’m glad I caught you. What are you still doing at work so late?”

*Fin*

#### **Author's Note:**

I have like a huge crush on David Harbour right now so uhh this happened. As always, please smash that like if you enjoyed and maybe leave a comment if you wanna, they always make me smile :)